



The Convertible Bus X marks the spot



All Hail the Journal

Since the last Convertible Bus (which postal subscribers will be receiving with this, because I'm crap), I have become sucked into the Cult of LiveJournal. Most of my writing over the last couple of months has been for my Journal. A couple of the pieces perhaps deserve wider distribution, so I have selected some of the best/most appropriate items for this issue. But I have given them some revisions.



All for One ...

Through a Radio 4 Front Row feature, prompted by the new movie of *The Count of Monte Cristo*, I found out it's the 200th anniversary of the birth of Alexandre Dumas (père).¹

I love Dumas' work, and have done ever since seeing Dick Lester's 1970s two-part adaptation of *Les trois mousquetaires*, as *The Three Musketeers* and *The Four Musketeers*. Despite claims made for the Gene Kelly/Vincent Price version, I consider this the definitive film adaptation (have Oliver Reed, Richard Chamberlain and Charlton Heston ever **been** better?). As a teenager I read *The Three Musketeers* and the sequel, *Twenty Years After*² (filmed by Lester as *Return of the Musketeers*). But it took me a long time to get a complete set of the novels. *Musketeers* was in ready supply, as was the last in the sequence, *The Man In The Iron Mask*. But

¹ To distinguish him from his virtually unknown (outside of France) son.

² This is how OUP publish it, but I'm sure my copy translates the title *Twenty Years On*.

the only copy of *Twenty Years After* I'd ever seen was the library copy I read in 1982, and the same was true of *The Vicomte de Bragelonne*, first volume in a trilogy that ends with *The Man In The Iron Mask*.³ The middle volume, *Louise de la Vallière*, I'd never seen a copy of at all. I finally managed to track them down in the mid-1990s, getting *Louise* in a bookshop in St Andrews in 1995. And next year OUP republished the whole lot.⁴

The radio feature also observed something I already knew to be the case. Every filmed version of *The Man In The Iron Mask*⁵ has Louis XIV supplanted by his identical twin brother Philippe. But the **novel** ends with the restoration of Louis, and the return of Philippe to the prison from whence he came. What also never comes out in film adaptations is that the four noble and inseparable comrades of the first novel find themselves as opponents by the end, with d'Artagnan, by now captain of the King's Musketeers, supporting Louis and Aramis trying to put Philippe in his place.⁶ (The 1999 movie gets the casting the wrong way round – Jeremy Irons should be Athos and John Malkovich the

devious priest Aramis.)⁷ Too unpalatable for the



Happy Families of Fandom # 7: The Freebairns.

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³ The overall name of the trilogy is *The Vicomte de Bragelonne*, or *Ten Years Later*, and it was originally meant to be a single work. *The Vicomte de Bragelonne* is also applied to the first volume when the work is broken down into three.

⁴ I may have to get hold of the OUP of *Iron Mask*, as apparently most versions are heavily (and badly) abridged so that it can be read apart from the other two volumes.

⁵ Including *The Fifth Musketeer*, a dodgy version with Lloyd and Beau Bridges.

⁶ Not to mention that each version has a different idea of which musketeers survive the events of the story. Only Aramis is alive by the end of the novel.

⁷ To be fair, Gerard Depardieu is a natural Porthos, but apart from that the film's rubbish. I caught up with it on a transatlantic flight – I find such flights very good for catching movies I feel I ought to see, but have no intention of ever paying money for.

buddy culture, I suppose. That's Hollywood for you.

(In researching this, I discovered that Dumas also wrote *Martin Guerre*, filmed of course as *The Return of Martin Guerre* [we won't mention *Sommersby*], and reminded myself that he wrote *La reine Margot*, also known as *Marguerite de Valois*. **Tobes for TAFF!**)



Notes from Damn Fine Con

I don't think I've had four days of such utter, utter insanity. As Mark said, every time you thought it couldn't get more surreal, it did. And this was a con that started with one of the TAFF candidates being crucified. Photographic evidence makes it look as if I was a safe distance away from all this. I wasn't.

The Cult of LiveJournal event⁸ Max arranged went well. In the end we borrowed one of the programme rooms, and ran the item there rather than in Max and Ang's room. Fifteen minutes before we were meant to begin, Ang suggested we explain LiveJournal to anyone who didn't know what it was "through the medium of interpretative dance". So we did. It was this that provoked a James Bacon remark that "it looked fun, but was all too weird for me", which by any criteria is A Result. In fact, we were much funnier rehearsing it, when we had more space, except that neither me nor Ang could stop laughing for more than ten seconds.

The next day, we explained TAFF in the same way, with the assistance of Alison Scott (though if fingers be pointed, it was originally Mark's idea, which he didn't quite have the nerve to follow through). James entered at exactly the same moment as he had the night before, and this time had to get Stef to show him how weird it all was. Looking at the pictures, you can see James' point really.

Jonathan Cain, all of eighteen months old, give or take, showed that he will grow up to be a true fan by standing on a sofa and shouting "women!" at the all and sundry in the bar. (This led his mother to suggest that he will in the future be apprenticed to Tobes.) Later he showed that he is already keeping up the family traditions by pointing at people Alison was trying to get fanzine articles out of and saying "Do it!" He'll go far.

Meanwhile, in the Demolition Derby Lawnmower Racing, Truffans vs. Cool People (= old vs. young) rather showed that Our Greatest Living Fanwriters are perhaps a bit old to effectively run around with lawnmowers. Fortunately Claire's suggestion of Croydon vs. Walthamstow was ig-

⁸ If you don't know, don't ask. You'll regret it.

nored, as neither she nor Alison Freebairn had the footwear to do more than pose with lawnmowers.

And there are lots of other fine memories, such as doing Blues Brothers karaoke with Phil and Neil (Alison F's ~~victim~~ intended); Ang and the Best Dress At The Con on Saturday night (it was lovely); Jonathan stealing the show at the poolside event by stealing the pool; the old lady tour ("we begin with Mrs Doris Brooking of Surbiton, before moving to Esher, where we will see Mrs Betty Welkes ..."); Alison F's cleavage (worth every penny she spent, but that *poor* bear); and the slug racing, that ended with The Interruption Of A Serious Programme Item With Something Silly, perfectly in keeping with the con, except that They (the conrunners) should have been doing it to Us (the Truffen), not the other way round.

The pictures I got back are excellent, but there isn't room for them here. Overall, going to DFC has given me the confidence to run with some more Stupid Ideas I've had, the results of which might be seen in the future.



The Convertible Bus No. 10 was brought to you through the medium of interpretative dance, by **Tony Keen, 15 Heathbridge, Heathbridge Approach, Brooklands Road, Weybridge, Surrey, KT13 0UN**. Still not a Croydon fanzine. ☒ keentony@hotmail.com. LiveJournal: <http://www.livejournal.com/~swisstone>. May 2002.



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(or talk to me)



Tobes for TAFF – why the hell not?

(still time to vote)

